

COLLINGDALE, PA —This afternoon Congressman Joe Sestak (D-PA) spoke to over 100 senior constituents at the Collingdale Fire Company on a range of issues from protecting Medicare and Social Security solvency to the Elder Abuse Victims Act (H.R. 5352), a piece of legislation he introduced last week to protect America's seniors from elder abuse and neglect. — “We must ensure that as a nation we protect the independence and dignity of our loved ones as they age. Everyday, too many of our nation's seniors become victim to physical, emotional or sexual abuse, and we must ensure that those who commit such crimes are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.” said Congressman Sestak. “The Elder Abuse Victims Act recognizes the limitations to our country's approach to elder abuse prosecution and rehabilitation, and puts in place a system to assess and adequately respond to these deficiencies.”

The number of elder abuse cases is on the rise across the country, according to estimates by the National Research Council Panel to Review Risk and Prevalence of Elder Abuse, between one and two million Americans age 65 or older have been victims of elder abuse. These are uncertain estimates because definitions of elder abuse vary widely from state-to-state, and there are many imperfections in our national effort to adequately prevent, prosecute, and rehabilitate victims of this type of abuse.

At the event, Congressman Sestak spoke of his support and co-sponsorship of the Elder Justice Act (H.R. 1783), a comprehensive piece of legislation that would create an Elder Justice Coordinating Council to make recommendations on elder neglect, provide organizations and states with ombudsmen to address abuse and neglect in nursing homes, and provide older Americans with the same protections as victims of domestic abuse.

Additionally, during his remarks, Congressman Sestak discussed his support for a range of legislation to address challenges facing America's seniors from accessing health care and affordable prescription drugs to affordable housing and rising energy costs.

The Congressman spoke of the need for the government to negotiate lower drug prices for American seniors and people with disabilities in the Medicare program. The Medicare Prescription Drug Negotiation Act (H.R. 4) would help seniors get better prices on prescription medications under Medicare. The provision in the current Medicare Rx Drug law, which explicitly forbids the Department of Health and Human Services from conducting such cost-reducing negotiations, will be repealed.

He also spoke of his support for legislation to waive the cap on federally insured reverse mortgages, which enable homeowners to tap the equity in their house. A reverse mortgage is a unique loan that enables senior homeowners to stay in their homes and remain financially independent by converting part of the equity without having to sell the home, give up title or take on an additional monthly mortgage payment.

Finally, Congressman Sestak spoke of his support for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), a federal block grant program that provides states with annual funding to operate home energy assistance programs for low-income households. In addition to helping low-income families and the elderly pay their energy bills, LIHEAP funds energy crisis intervention programs, low-cost residential weatherization, and other energy-related home

repairs. In 2006, LIHEAP served over 385,000 households in Pennsylvania.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.